

they would, with little or no training, encounter and defeat the most formidable array of veterans from the continent.¹ Hence the treaty of Ryswick was followed by the immediate reduction of the army, first to 10,000 and then to 7,000 men. The formula adopted by the House of Commons in 1698 was that all forces raised since September 1680 were to be disbanded,² Macaulay summarises with great skill the arguments employed in the controversy between the opponents and the supporters of a standing army, and agrees with William III in holding that 7,000 men were far too few to secure the safety of the nation. He blames William for pressing for the retention of the Dutch guards instead of asking for an additional number of English troops instead, which he thinks the King might have succeeded in obtaining from Parliament.³ On the other hand it is hardly fair to the opposition not to mention the facts that, besides the 7,000 men in England, about 7,000 more in Scotland and 12,000 in Ireland were retained in pay.⁴ Even so, in the condition of Europe at the time, the army was far too small for its purpose. The treaty of Ryswick, like the treaty of Amiens, was merely a truce. Parliament in its ignorance of foreign affairs provided just enough men to maintain the peace of the kingdom against internal foes, but deprived the government of the striking force it needed in order to

fulfil the foreign obligations of England and
defend her
European or colonial interests. In 1701 war
broke out
again, and the government was called upon to
furnish 10,000
men for the defence of Holland (under the
treaty of 1677)
and was required at the same time to send a
force to the

¹ VI, 2738 (xxiii).

² VI, 2743 (xxiii).

^a VI, 2881-6 (xxiv).

⁴ Charles Dalton, *English Army Lists* (6 vols.; 1892-1904),
iv. pp. xviii,
216, 301 ; J. W. Fortescue, *History of the British Army*
(1910), i. 383-9.